

the homeowner does not enjoy and I think that we have to finally recognize that it is the homeowner who is bearing a greater share of the burden than they deserve. Let me also suggest that the figures over the last years have shown time and again, if Dave Newell was here he would harp on this time and again, that we have shifted and shifted to the homeowner much of the payment of personal and general property taxes. These different exemptions have provided for a tax shift. Somebody ends up paying those taxes. It is a question of who pays and thus far most of those exemptions, as I said, have not benefited the homeowner and it is the homeowner who has picked up the difference and seen their taxes increase over the last few years. And now from the figures I have seen, the homeowner is paying about the fifth highest property taxes in the country, whereas Nebraska in general has about the tenth highest property taxes in the country. So what that says is that the homeowner in Nebraska is particularly hard hit by high property taxes, that compared to other states our homeowner is particularly paying a heavy burden and that compared to the other property taxpayers in this state the homeowner again is paying a greater share of the cost perhaps than might be a case in other states. Now a homestead exemption which is proposed by LB 712 is a very fair way to approach the problem. It provides for us to every homeowner in the state the same level of tax relief. Now this is the same for any district in the state. We all represent the same number of people, 32 or 33,000, and those people all have to live in homes and so if you provide an across the board homestead exemption, nobody loses, everybody wins whether you are rural or urban. We all benefit from that because everybody lives in a home and everybody receives the exemption. It is the fairest approach and it is progressive in the sense that the little guy will get the same relief as the big guy. The poor person will receive the same relief as the wealthy person and that to me is the best tax policy we could adopt. This body narrowly did not advance that bill, but I propose that that is the better solution than this bill. And so whether or not we come to any sort of conclusions through amendments to this bill that 25 people can live with, I still think the approach is wrong and I say that in addition that Senator Hannibal... I think, if any of you doubted that this is the wrong approach, Senator Hannibal's figures, it showed that the business community and the individuals that own property and multiple properties can end up getting multiple benefits from the